



# ICON College of Technology and Management

## Information about our management and governance arrangements

### Introduction

The decision of the Government to introduce an Office for Students under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and opportunities to obtain Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) impacts our thinking on management and governance at ICON College. At a recent HEFCE Conference [**HEFCE Research Study: Academic Governance Practice within Alternative Providers of HE March 2018**] it was stressed that appropriate governance in alternative providers needs to be transparent.

This paper presents our approach to management and governance arrangements and critically assessing it against the public interest governance principles set out in Annex E [**Regulatory Advice 2 S.4 paragraph 80 p18**]. Over time we have also drawn on informed views from HEFCE; QAA, Leadership Foundation etc. as well as our non-executive members; directors; senior managers; student representatives and ICON College staff as a means of continuous improvement. We accept there is always the case for further improvement in our management and governance arrangements and the next 2 years provides an excellent opportunity to ensure they are congruent with our aim to seek TDAP and to increase access to public funds for our students.

### Management Arrangements

#### Accountable Officer

The Accountable Officer is the Managing Director who is the key communicant with the OfS.

#### Chair of the Governing body

The Principal is the Chair of the governing body which in ICON College is the Senior Management Team (SMT). This is the group responsible for the management of the provider and is made up of: the Principal; Managing Director and Vice Principal/Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

#### Main Shareholders

The Directors

#### Directors

Professor Nurun Nabi – Principal  
Mr Azizur Rahman – Managing Director

#### Academic Departments

ICON College has five departments. These are:

- Business and Management Studies
- Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management
- Health and Social Care
- Information Technology
- Engineering

The academic head of the College is the Principal who chairs the Academic Board and is supported by the Vice Principal and Head of Quality and Enhancement [**See: QAE Manual: Organisation Chart S.1 p.30**]. Each academic department has a Head who chair the Assessment Board of other Department with Programme Managers taking responsibility for the effective delivery and assessment of the Pearson B/TEC Higher Nationals and reporting to their respective Head of Department. The Managing Director takes additional responsibility as Director of Admissions and oversees a range of pastoral, registration and administrative activity including:

- Student Counselling and Careers
- Finance
- Student Attendance
- Admissions and Enrolment and
- IT Support

The Directors do not involve themselves in recruiting students to the College Courses.

### **College Governance**

Information about our governance and management arrangements are contained in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual [**Part 1 pp. 12-30**]. ICON College has a Board of Directors and the approach we take to governance and management is based on the small size and complexity of the organisation that ensures it is fit for the purpose.

There are four senior boards constituting our governance arrangements [**QAE Manual: Committee Structure S.1 p 21**]. These are:

- a) Board of Directors
- b) SMT
- c) Academic Board
- d) Advisory Board

largely responsible for overseeing governance and including the business direction and academic oversight of the College. The Board of Directors sets and reviews the business direction and has delegated academic authority to the Academic Board which has sovereignty of all matters academic. The Academic Board is the watchdog that enables staff to question and test received wisdom as well as being able to put forward new ideas and a range of opinions. The Advisory Board made up of seven independent senior external advisers and three senior internal staff as well as a student alumni member advises the Board of Directors, the Academic Board and SMT on a range of both business and academic matters and issues relevant to the governance of the institution [**QAEM: Committee Structure: p21 and Organisation Chart: p30**]. There are clear sets of terms of reference for the Academic Board, SMT and Advisory Board [**QAE Manual: Academic Board p.22 and Advisory Board: p.29**].

Our system of governance ensures that all students have opportunities to engage with the College at all levels with representation on the Academic Board [**QAE Manual Academic Board membership p.22 and Advisory Board membership p.29**].

The Board of Directors delegate day-to-day operational matters to the Senior Management Team (SMT) that is made up of the Principal, Managing Director and Vice Principal and Head of Quality and Enhancement [**QAE Manual: Senior Management Team: Terms of Reference S1. P.31**].

### **Terms of Reference (Referent):**

*HEFCE defines governance at the governing body level as “the means by which strategy is set and monitored, managers are held to account, risks are managed, stewardship responsibilities are discharged and viability is ensured” (HEFCE audit code 2014).*

The governance structure and role has taken this into account in each Board’s respective Terms of Reference.

### *Advisory Board*

Whilst the Governing Body is the SMT in the organogram, the Advisory Board plays a key advisory role for the Boards of Directors, Academic Board and SMT (**See Organogram: QAE Handbook**). The Advisory Board receives the Academic Board minutes and gives advice on specified institutional activities. Advising on the mission and strategic vision of and threats to the College

- a) Advising on the mission statement and strategic plan
- b) Advising the governing body (SMT) on the resourcing of academic courses and provision of study support
- c) Commenting on student progression, achievement and performance
- d) Reporting on significant external activities that fall within its remit including the relationship with awarding bodies/organisations
- e) Approving the appointment of the external chair and Advisory Board members
- f) Receiving minutes from the Academic Board
- g) Receiving nominations from the SMT or HoD Committee for the position of ONE alumni student member.

The College ensures that the independent leadership, size of external membership, composition, diversity, skills mix and terms of reference for the Advisory Board is appropriate for the nature, size and complexity of the College and to give confidence in the quality of advice to the Board of Directors and the Academic Board. Non-Executive Members are recruited and retained taking note of the specialist areas of expertise supporting the College activities. They are required to have senior responsibilities within their career-specific area. Expansion of activity to cover specific areas including audit, risk, finance and HR, will be kept under review to align the work of the Advisory Board with best practice.

Examples of expertise sought by the Board *albeit not exclusive* might include:

- Experienced academics
- Finance/Accounting background or specialism
- Legal/Governance
- QAE
- Community representative
- Marketing and Public Relations
- HRM
- Academic Administration
- Estates
- Subject specific knowledge to map against College’s academic activities

## **Critical assessment**

The choice of committee and management reporting structures and members reflects the size of the governing body (SMT). The governing body is presented in two separate reporting charts covering Organisation Chart and Committee Structure [**QAE Handbook S.1 p.21 and p.30**].

We have ensured that the Advisory Board is externally chaired with a range of experienced externals and this brings a sense of independence to our overall governance. Externality on the Advisory Board brings in a greater awareness and knowledge from the wider community, thereby informing and enhancing our practices.

At the same time our students have opportunities to engage with the Advisory Board and the Academic Board bringing them closer to key decisions and opening up broader communication. Both the Advisory Board and the Academic Board allow free debate.

## **Conclusion**

Our governance arrangements are fully articulated in the ICON College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual. This is reviewed on an annual basis and we are further informed through conference attendance specifically those run by QAA, OfS and HEFCE. Taking into account of our size and complexity we operate a system that works well in a for profit alternative provider and the external advice we draw on through the Advisory Board helps us to keep on track as we move towards validation, delegated authority and eventually taught degree awarding powers.